

Al-Taqiyya, Dissimulation Part 2

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Al-Taqiyya According To The Shi'a

The Shi'a did NOT innovate or concoct anything new, they simply followed the injunctions of Allah (SWT), as stated in the Qur'an, and the custom of the Seal of Prophethood, Muhammad (S).

Nonetheless, one must also examine what the Shi'a themselves say about al-Taqiyya:

al-Shaykh Muhammad Ridha al-Mudhaffar in his book, "Aqa'id al-Imamiyah," wrote that:

"al-Taqiyya should conform to specific rules vis-a-vis the situation wherein eminent danger is present; these rules, listed in many books of Fiqh (Jurisprudence), along with the severity of the danger determine the validity, or lack of, al-Taqiyya itself. It is not mandatory to practice it (al-Taqiyya) at all times; on the contrary, it is permissible, and sometimes necessary, to abandon it (al-Taqiyya) altogether; as in the case where revealing the truth will further the cause of the religion, and provide a direct service to Islam; and (when the revealing of the truth is such that it constitutes) a jihad (striving) for (Islam's) sake; (verily,) in such a situation, wealth and life should be forsaken. Furthermore, al-Taqiyya is prohibited in instances wherein the killing of innocent people and the spread of corruption will result; and in cases wherein the marring of the religion will result, and/or a significant harm will befall the Muslims, either by leading them astray or corrupting and oppressing them.

Either way, al-Taqiyya, as the Shi'a uphold it, does not make of the Shi'a a secret cooperative that seeks to destroy and corrupt, as the enemies (of the Shi'a) wish to present them; (these critics launch their verbal attacks) without really heeding the subject (of al-Taqiyya); and (without even) laboring to understand our own opinion on the matter (of al-Taqiyya).

Nor does it (al-Taqiyya) mandate that the religion and its injunctions become a secret of secrets that cannot be disclosed to those who do not subscribe to its teachings. How so, when the books of the

Imamiyah (the Shi'a) that deal with the (subjects of) Fiqh, Kalam, and beliefs are in abundant supply, and have exceeded the limits (of publications) expected from any nation professing its beliefs."

Imam Khomeini in his book, "Islamic Government," also presents his view on al-Taqiyya. He believes that al-Taqiyya is permitted only when one's life is jeopardized. Whereas in cases wherein the religion of Allah (SWT), Islam, is in danger, it is not permitted even if it leads to one's death:

The Imams, may peace be upon them, imposed on the jurisprudence very important ordinances and committed them to shouldering and preserving the trust. It is not right to resort to dissimulation on every issue, small and big. Dissimulation was legislated to preserve one's life or others from damage on subsidiary issues of the laws. But if Islam in its entirety is in danger, then there is no place for dissimulation and for silence. What do you think a jurist should do if they force him to legislate or innovate?... If dissimulation forces on us to jump on the sultan's bandwagon then it should not be resorted to even if such refrainment leads to the death of the person concerned, unless his jumping on the bandwagon constitutes a real victory for Islam and the Muslims, as in the case of 'Ali Ibn Yaqtin and Nasiruddin in al-Tusi, may Allah have mercy upon their souls.

In his book, "Shi'ite Islam" (translated into English by Sayyed Hussein Nasr), the Shi'i scholar Allama Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Tabatabai defines Taqiyya as the situation where a person "hides his religion or certain of his religious practices in situations that would cause definite or probable danger as a result of the actions of those who are opposed to his religion or particular religious practices." He goes on to define the nature of the danger:

The exact extent of danger which would make permissible the practice of Taqiyya has been debated among different Shi'a scholars. In our view point, the practice of Taqiyya is permitted if there is definite danger facing one's own life or the life of one's family, or the possibility of the loss of the honor and virtue of one's wife or of other female members of the family, or the danger of the loss of one's material belongings to such an extent as to cause complete destitution and prevent a man from being able to continue to support himself and his family.

Tabatabai cited two verses from the Qur'an in support of al-Taqiyya:

"...except for precaution and dissimulation that you may protect yourselves against them..."(Qur'an 3:28)

تَتَّقُوا

مِنْهُمْ

تَقَاةٌ

...

For the above verse, the great Sunni scholar, Mawdudi, has a commentary in support of Taqiyya. Notice that in the above verse, the words "tattaqu" and "toqat" have exactly the same root as Taqiyya.

The second verse is the following:

"Any one who becomes unbeliever after being believer, EXCLUDING the one who is under compulsion and force while his heart is firm in faith, but the one go on in disbelief, Wrath of Allah is on to them and they will have a dreadful penalty,"(Qur'an 16: 106)

مَنْ كَفَرَ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ إِيمَانِهِ إِلَّا مَنْ أُكْرِهَ وَقَلْبُهُ مُطْمَئِنٌّ بِالْإِيمَانِ وَلَكِنْ مَنْ شَرَحَ بِالْكُفْرِ صَدْرًا فَعَلَيْهِمْ غَضَبٌ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ

Then Tabatabai explained:

As mentioned in both Sunni and Shi'ite sources this verse was revealed concerning 'Ammar Ibn Yasir. After the migration (hijrah) of the Prophet, the infidels of Mecca imprisoned some of the Muslims of that city and tortured them, forcing them to leave Islam and to return to their former religion of idolatry.

Included in this group who were tortured were Ammar and his father and mother. Ammar's parents refused to turn away from Islam and died under torture. But Ammar, in order to escape torture and death, outwardly left Islam and accepted idol worship, thereby escaping from danger. Having become free, he left Mecca secretly for Medina. In Medina he went before the Holy Prophet--upon whom be blessings and peace--and in a state of penitence and distress concerning what he had done, he asked the Prophet if by acting as he did, he had fallen outside the sacred precinct of religion. Then Prophet said that his duty was what he had accomplished. The above verse was then revealed.

The two verses cited above were revealed concerning particular cases but their meaning is such that they embrace all situations in which the outward expression of doctrinal belief and religious practice might bring about a dangerous situation. Besides these verses, there exist many traditions from the members of the Household of the Prophet, ordering Taqiyya when there is fear of danger.

Some have criticized Shi'a by saying that to employ the practice of Taqiyya in religion is opposed to the virtues of courage and bravery. The least amount of thought about this accusation will bring to light its invalidity, for Taqiyya must be practiced in a situation where man faces a danger which he cannot resist and against which he cannot fight.

Resistance to such a danger and failure to practice Taqiyya in such circumstances shows rashness and foolhardiness, not courage and bravery. The qualities of courage and bravery can be applied only when there is at least the possibility of success in man's efforts. But before a definite or probable danger against which there is no possibility of victory--such as drinking water in which there is probably poison or throwing oneself before a cannon that is being fired or lying down on the tracks before an onrushing train--any action of this kind is nothing but a form of madness and contrary to logic and common sense. Therefore, we can summarize by saying that Taqiyya must be practiced only when there is a definite danger which cannot be avoided and against which there is no hope of a successful struggle and victory.

Please refer to Shi'ite Islam

Allamah Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Tabatai

Translated by Seyyed Hossein Nasr

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It is apparent then, from the above quotes, that the Shi'a are NOT advocates of hypocrisy, secrecy, and cowardice, as some of the Wahhabis, among others, purport.

The following is from the book of Moojan Momen, which is entitled "An Introduction to Shi'i Islam: History

and Doctrines of Twelver Shi'ism,”

When discussing the sixth Shi'i Imam (successor to the prophet), Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (as), he writes:

The doctrine of Taqiyya (dissimulation) was widely used at that time. It served to protect the followers of Imam al-Sadiq at a time when al-Mansur (the caliph) was conducting a brutally oppressive campaign against the Followers of the Members of the House of Prophet and their supporters.

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